



Gunagrahi

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Inauguration of the 10 day Yakshagana fete



80

yakshagana daashaha

*For the Popularity of
Yakshagana*

Kondadhakuli

Mantapam Prabhakar

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ

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Yakshagana

Yakshagana is yet to get its due in the form of national and international recognition, awards, titles etc. to the virtuous artistes who are no less equipped than the artistes of Kathakali and Mohini Attam. Truly, it is a great tragedy that such an ancient and great artistic and aesthetic theater form of Karnataka as Yakshagana is overlooked and ignored as a non-entity by the powers that be who are at the giving end.

Yakshagana, (roughly translated as song of the Celestials) is a complete theater which includes song, dance and drama and is extremely popular in Malnad, Utara and Dakshina Kannada districts of the Karnataka State. It is essentially a stage form which entertains and educates the rural folks. An episode from Ramayana or Mahabharata is selected and accordingly the team do their own make up and wear very attractive and colorful costumes. Generally, male themselves don the roles of women. The heavy make-up is essential to depict heavenly and celestial characters in Yakshagana. A performance is commenced with a pooja to Shri Ganesha followed by buffoonery by "Kodangis." A loud background music is provided by a chande and a maddale (various types of drums) and a tala (cymbals) handled by a team of three. Seated among them is Bhagavata who is the producer, the director and the master of the ceremonies. In short, he is all in one. The people in distress also take vow to arrange a performance to please their family deity. There are temples where Yakshagana is performed throughout the year, except in the rainy season at their premises. Thus Yakshagana means songs of the demigods. Yakshagana is a lively, fast-paced form in which songs, dances and improvised dialogue mix according to a prescribed structure. Karnataka ragas like Mohana, Hamsadhwani, Abheri, Athana, Bhairavi, Begde, Kedaragowla, Bilabari, Shivaranjani among others are used.

Performance

Improvised dialogues (*matu*) by the actor-dancers expand on the content of the songs. Until recently, this portion was not written down because it changed from night to night and from actor to actor. Most prasangas are based on the stories from the great Hindu epics, the Mahabharata and Ramayana and from the purana and concern seri-

ous events from the lives of well known epic figures. Humor is added in the performance by the clowns (*hasyagara*) through comic antics and witty remarks.

Of the 24 districts in Karnataka, Yakshagana has established its firm roots in the districts of Dakshina Kannada, Utara Kannada, Dharwad, Mysore and Hassan. Based on its technique of presentation, Yakshagana has been broadly classified into 'Mudalapaya' (the custom of the east) and 'Paduvalapaya' (the custom of the west). Popularly known as 'Bayadana' or 'Aata', Mudalapaya is widely practiced in places like Tumkur, Bangalore, Kolar, Mandya, Mysore, Hassan, Chitradurga, Bellary, Dharwad, Bijapur, Gulbarga, Raichur, Bidar and Belgaum. While Yakshagana of North Karnataka has assumed varied forms like 'Sannati', 'Doddatta', 'Krishna Purijatha' and 'Dasaratha'. The form of Paduvalapaya popular extensively in Utara and Dakshina Kannada districts has been further divided into 'Thenku Titu' (south) and 'Badagu Titu' (north). Paduvalapaya is practiced in places like Karki, Keladi, Ikkeri, Sagur, Kolluru, Marasukkatt, Sankuru, Coondapur, Kotesvara, Kots, Udupi, Dharmasthal, Mangalore, Brahmagiri, Suratkal and Saligrama.

Performance:

The entire Yakshagana performance rests on footwork, body movements, gestures and facial expressions. The rhythmic movements are the yardstick to feel the pulse of Yakshagana. Devoid of gentle movements, the dancing pattern in Yakshagana consists of squatting and jumping requiring quick body movements. During the battle sequences, the tempo of the dance is swift and intense and the pattern varies from one character to another. The performers donning a heavy costume jump high in the air and reel vigorously without



Interaction with Education and artistic cultural traditions

If one were to concentrate on the non-achievements of our educational curriculum, the grouse list would be endless. The one area, in which action has totally failed in keeping up with supposedly good intentions, is in making education interact actively with the artistic cultural traditions of India. Now as the country has already crossed the 50 years of independent existence, the weariness of our educational vision in trying to overcome this gap, is all the more glaring. Fortunately, well-directed voluntary effort has stepped in, in a big way; to make up for lost time.

The efforts of a few organisations like the Society for Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Craft Among Youth (SPIC-MACAY) spread over several schools and colleges across the country, represent one of the finest examples of selfless service in the face of innumerable financial and organisational obstacles. Obviously, the task is too stupendous for one organisation. That there are smaller and usually well-meant and earnest voluntary endeavours supplementing SPICMACAY's efforts is a gratifying feature.

It is our bounden duty to do something significant as "part of a project to strengthen culture and values in school". The organisations have got to work with school children to enable "integrated participatory development" through cultural activity. It is imperative that we have to settle down for social service involving young impressionable minds, rather than becoming part of the money earning drive—such a natural and compelling force today.

Creative workshops in schools comprising the three disciplines of Applied Art, Painting and Sculpture, with senior faculty members of the College of Art imparting theoretical knowledge and demonstrating methodologies, followed by competitions involving students from Class VIII to Class X in each discipline, focussing on the theme of "Indian Culture and Indian Independence", should become part of the recent cultural thrust to be mounted. The other dimension of the effort could be to have demonstrations and lectures on classical music and dance featuring veteran musicians and dancers expert dance and musicologists.

-----Karnataka Kala Sri Dr.M.Surya Prasad.

losing physical balance and rhythm. The dancing spectacle of demon characters like 'Athikaya', 'Indrajithu' or 'Shurpanakhi' is breath taking. The gestures, movements and footwork visually aid the comprehension of play. It is delightful to observe that no artiste over steps his role by resorting to long speeches. He performs with utmost dignity befitting the role.

COSTUME AND MAKE-UP

The splendour of Yakshagana lies with the unusual costumes and make-up of the artistes. The smooth flow of heavy and gorgeous costumes testifies to the stimulating power of this audiovisual medium. The facial make up varies from simple to intricate designs depending upon the roles they play. Motif on the face varies for hero, demon and female characters. Demonical make-up is heavy with artificial eyelids and white dots are liberally applied to portray the ferocious and violent nature of the demons. The traditional costume consists of a dhoti, a pyjama, a jacket and a loose gown. Depending upon the characters, they increase the girth of the body with sheets of colorful cloth and sarees tied around. In Yakshagana, it is customary for males to perform even the role of females.

Ornaments consist of 'Bhujakeerthi' worn for the elbow and looks like colourful shining wings. Its surface is plain in 'Mudalapaya' and it is rough, thorn-like in Paduvalapaya. Besides the heavy armlets and anklets, intricately designed 'Edehara' (chest ornament made of wood and pasted with paper and glass pieces) and 'Veeragase' (a piece of designed ornament tied around and flowing beneath the waist) are the other ornaments worn by the artistes.

Headgears have a wide array of crowns. The selection of the headgear commensurate with the role represented by the artistes. The less important characters wear simple turbans of cloth. 'Mundasu' is a heavily set headgear, which gives a rich look to the character. It is broader in the middle which tapers as it proceeds upwards and appears like a lotus leaf. Since the Mundasu is heavy, it requires talent and prowess to wear it and dance. Female costuming is simple and matches with the contemporary style but does not match with the psychedelic and gorgeous costumes of male roles. Thus it is clear from the above observations that Yakshagana is a potential theatre form and has been a significant medium of entertainment and enlightenment. We have many families dedicating themselves to this form. We have outstanding professional and amateur artistes who have sacrificed everything for the sake of Yakshagana. It is also noteworthy that youngsters are also being attracted towards this wholesome theatre form. It has the same features of Kathakali and Mohini Attom.

To create an awakening in the minds of the powers that be and ultimately help in Yakshagana getting its due at various levels a ten day Yakshagana festival was held at Kuvempu Kalakshetra. It also marked the launching of a new Yakshagana troupe "Poomachandra Yakshagana Pratishthana" led by young Yakshagana-exponent Kondadakuli Ramachandra Hegde. Another equally gifted and talented artiste Totimane Ganapathi Hegde has also joined hands with him. These two donned the key roles of various Puranic episodes and made the festival a memorable one. Hosur Gurunandan, Beleyur Sanjay, Aitamane Ganapathi, Mooruru Nagendra, Neerjeddu Chandrakumar, Manki Eshwara Nayka, R.D.Rama among others gave a creditable account of themselves. Mooruru Vishnu Bhat, Mantapam Prabhakar Upadhy, Siddhapura Ashok Bhatta and Mahaveer Jain in women roles won the adulation of the audience. Chapparanmane Sridhara Hegde excelled as Vidooshaka (clown). Besides Prasannakumar Hegde, the renowned vocalist Kolagi Keshava Hegde was at his best. Yallapur Shaekara Bhagavata (mridanga) and Sampa Lakshminarayana Bhatta (chande) were the successful percussionists. The festival was held under the joint auspices of Poornachandra Yakshagana Pratishthana, Pranta Pratinidhi Parishath of Sri Ramachandrapura Math and Yakshagana Yogakshema Abhiyana led by V.R.Hegde Hegde mane. The Swamiji of Sri Ramachandrapura Math inaugurated the festival in the presence of V.R.Hegde, M.N.Bhat, Krishna Bhat and others (See the cover page photo).



Dr. A.H. Rama Rao & Sudha Rao

Arun's artistry

Saraswati Sangeet Vidyalaya and Ananya, Malleswaram had jointly arranged a Hindustani violin concert by Arun Bagal at the latter's auditorium. Bagal, who is a resident of Washington, DC, USA, has had the privilege of learning from stalwarts like Bhaskar Chandavarkar, Vijaya Raghava Rao and D.K. Datar. He started his recital with two khylas in the raag Kedar, played in the Gayaki style. This was followed by the raag Kalavati played in the instrumental style with alap, jod, jhala and two compositions in Roopak and Ek taals. He then played a Marathi Natya geet from the play 'Devamaanas' and concluded with a short Mishra Dhun. For unknown reasons, Bagal finished the entire program in about one and a quarter hour, which made it a little unsatisfactory. The fact to be appreciated is the manner in which the NRIs keep our cultural flag flying wherever they live. Rajendra Nakod on the Tabla was, as usual, exuberant.

Shyla's rich voice

"Shruti" presented a Hindustani vocal recital by Shyla Bhandarkar in Rajajinagar. After initial training by Madhava Bhat of Udupi and Pt. Yashwant Bua Joshi of Bombay, Shyla is now

learning from Pandit Vinayak Torvi. Endowed with a rich voice, she started the recital with the rag Poorva Kulyan. She developed the raag leisurely with due emphasis on the pivotal notes of Gandhar and Nishad. The chhota khyl 'Bahuta Dina Beete' was short but did not carry any emotional appeal. The following Marathi Abhang was well presented. After the interval, she sang a composition in Tilak Kamod set to Jhap Taal and concluded with a Bhairavi Bhajan. Shashi Bhushan Gerjar on the Tabla and C.G. Anantaswami on the Harmonium gave able support.

Blossoming Bhuvanesh

Young Bhuvanesh Komkali, the grandson of the legendary singer Kumar Gandharv, gave a Hindustani vocal music recital at the Alliance Francaise on. Bhuvanesh is endowed with a strong voice but does not give it full play because he tries to follow the staccato style of his grandfather. Kumar Gandharva had to adopt this style to overcome a disability but Bhuvanesh could not do justice to either the clarity of the lyrics or the intensity of feeling that were the hallmarks of his grandfather's singing. Behag was the opening rag in which two compositions were sung. The loosely structured presentation gave rise to repetitions and the sambhav nishad swara didn't get adequate representation. A couple of fast taans were attractive but the singer failed to

REVIEWS

give a taut and complete form of this lively rag. This was followed by a chhota khyl in the rag Bhoop and then a tarana in the same raag. The tarana did not pack the usual punch. Bhuvanesh concluded his recital with a few lighter compositions, ending with a couple of Kabir bhajans. The young singer, although headed in the right direction under his grandmother Vasundhara Komkali's tutelage, has miles to go in order to flower into a seasoned artiste.

Intense Indudhar

"Smriti" arranged a Pt. Rama Rao Naik memorial Hindustani vocal music concert by Pt. Indudhar Nirodi of the Agra Gharana at 'Kalashree', Rajajinagar. Pt. Nirodi started his recital with the raga Poorvi, an evening melody and a That or Melakarta raga. With the use of just two registers, the middle and the upper, he was able to etch a beautiful picture of the entire raga. The light touch on the Shuddha madhyam, a note which is external to the melakarta and which is used to differentiate this raga from Puriya Dhanashree was characteristic of the raga. This was followed by a short piece in Ektaal in the raga Marwa. In the normal course, this raga precedes Poorvi in the time scale but the combination of Komal rishabh and Shuddha dhaivat sets this raga apart. After the interval Pt. Nirodi took up raga Kamod. The Agra

gharana, like the other gharanas, has a few favourite ragas that suit its racy style and Kanod is one of them. He presented a beautiful composition of Late Pt. Ratanjankar that completely delineated all the subtle nuances of the raga. Agra gharana specialises in using a medium tempo and weaving a complete picture of the raga by continuous movement over the entire octave and not by the note-by-note build up technique. This aspect was superbly brought out by the singer in Kanod. This reporter heard that Pt. Nirodi later presented the raga Shahana Kanada and a Devaranama and the final, mandatory Bhairavi. The singer was ably supported by Pt. Gourang Kodical on the Tabla and Vyasamurthi Katti on the Harmonium.

—Andal Sharma

KK Murthy's great service

Academy of Music led by a famous connoisseur K.K. Murthy is doing a great service to the cause of Karnatak music. Besides holding concerts it conducts various competitions in various categories annually and the winners at those competitions are presented with an attractive cash prize. This year's

prizes were distributed to: Vocal junior: N.S. Jyotsna (first prize) and Aarathi Sundaresan (second prize). Instrumental junior: Aneesh Vidyashankar (violin: first) and A.K. Gurudhat (flute, second). Vocal senior: Chandanbala (first) and Manudath (second). Instrumental senior: D. Raghunandana Rao (flute, first) and Keshavaprasad (violin, second). Prof. C.N. R. Rao gave away the prizes in the presence of K.K. Murthy. The occasion was also marked by an innovative Tarangini veena concert by Suma Sudheendra and a solo Bharatanaty recital by Vani Ganapathi under an endowment created by the noted scientist Prof. C.N. R. Rao.

Suma was accompanied by an ensemble of percussionists comprising Anur Anantha krishna Sharma (mridanga), B.K. Chandra mowgli (ghata), S.N. Narayananamurthy (ghata), S.V. Balakrishna (morsing), B.C. Manjunath (konnokkol), Ganeshkumar (violin), M.A. Krishnamurthy (pakhawaj), Madhusudan (dholak and ghata singari), Udayaraj Kapur and Venugopalraju (tablas) and Arun Sukumar (drums). Though high decibel took its own toll in enjoyment, the concert proved that her Tarangini

Veena is capable of fulfilling the needs of a successful Karnatak concert. Suma began with a Lalgudi Jaya raman's composition set to Babudari raga. This swara and laya oriented composition was explored full well in setting a lively mood for a delightful experience. The rendition of a raga, tana and pallavi in Dharmavathi raga was enjoyable. The brief raga and tana session could highlight Suma's grasp of the medium and mode. I was impressed by the raga swaroopa erected by the veena player. The pallavi was rendered in traditional format. It was in the kalpana swara sequence that the concert reached the climax. The cascade of rhythm through well-laid out swaras left behind an indelible mark. The concert concluded with a Swati Tirunal's Dhanasri tillana. Vani vivifies

I was bit surprised to see a lean and thin Vani Ganapathi on stage. Accompanied by KRV Pulikesi (nattuvanga), D.S. Srivatsa and Indubala Ganapati (vocal), Prasanna kumar (rhythm pad), Jaya ram (flute) and V.R. Chandra sekhar (mridanga), Vani gave an admirable display of her dance equipment. She could overcome the initial fatigues

very soon. The Ganesha stuti was followed by an interesting nritta, nrithya and natya item tagged with 'Mahadeva Shiva Shambho' (Revathi raga). The basic four syllables—ta dhi tom and nom—were delineated in 3-4-5-7-9 patterns resulting in an expansive nritta comprising attractive aduvus, teer manas and freezes. The way she eulogised the Lord Shiva was captivating. Her abhinaya was of a high standard.

Likewise, Vani portrayed all the three characters — Balakrishna, Yashoda and the saint-composer Purandaradasa in the exposition of the celebrated Devaranama 'Jagad-dharana'. Her satwika abhinaya was enviable. The concluding tillana in Desh brought to the fore her hold over nritta.

HRK strikes

In the ongoing series entitled 'Kannada Kavi Kavya nrithya roopaka yojane' the 11th dance drama 'Prabhu Linga leele' was presented at Ravindra Kalakshetra by the students of Keshava Nrithya Shale under the expert guidance and direction of veteran Guru H.R. Keshavamurthy. 'Prabhu linga leele' is a significant poetic work by Chamarasa, one of

the leading poets of 1419-1446. It unfolds the story of Allama Prabhu as a divine power. He was not merely a Vachanakaara (writer of Vachanas) but also he was an accomplished Purama jnani. He had conquered Maya. His story also is a fine example of the victory of Satwika over Taamasa. The colourful and traditional costumes and settings added to the effectiveness of rendition. Guru Keshavamurthy's direction fetched the expected results. Vasanthalakshmi and Shyamprakash's dance direction was of great utility. Paramashivan's music composition had most of the Karnatak ragas. B.K. Shyamprakash (nattuvanga), Balasubramanya Sharma (vocal), Ashwatha narayana (flute), Srihari (mridanga), Prasannakumar (rhythm pad), Paramashivan (casio) and Geetha Shyamprakas (veena) enriched the dance drama with their useful play. Raghu nandan (as Shiva), Namratha (Parvathi), Suresh among other dancers proved their presence felt with their dance-talents.

19th Kinkini Nrithyotsava Nirupama Rajendra shines

The 19th Kinkini

Nrithyotsava held at Dr. H. N. Kalakshetra, Jayanagar, for six days was a grand success. Young danseuse Nirupama Rajendra provided relish to the rasikas with her innate talent picking up natya not as just formal movements but with a vision which perceived its stylised structures as visualising the classical dance form. Her performance was thoroughly enjoyable. It was informed by the artistry which went beyond formal skills.

Nirupama who is well known for her Kathak-proiciency, proved her immaculate expertise in Bharatanatyam too. She was an involved-self and went through her recital with total dedication. The opening nritta swaravali (Amrithavarshini) vouched for her clear understanding of the pure dance. It contained in it all the technical aspects of rhythm.

With the sweetness of the attami giving her dance an authentic dimension, Nirupama proceeded to prove in 'Atma Soundarya' ('Madhumaya samaye') in raga Vasantha and in the great krithi of Thyagaraja 'Nagumomu' that she is a graceful and expressive dancer. In 'Atma Soundarya' the dancer could impressively sketch the love of

Parvathi and Shiva and also the episode of Manmatha dahana. The eritta was taut.

The choreography of the piece was traditionally balanced and compact and not crazily jati-weighted as is the modern vogue. One felt thankful to her Guru Narmada for the refinement. Nirupama translated it all with her gentle artistic touch lending a special charm to the correctness of her movements, gestures, mime and footwork.

She danced with a joyous spirit. There was an athletic force in the show of skill. Raciness was the keynote of the recital under review in which the rhythmic experience was strong. Clarity did not suffer on account of speed. The dance choreography retained its traditional moorings. The modern momentum was conferred on it by the general acceleration of the pace of presentation. Depiction of a Purandaradasa pada 'Tamboori meetidava' and tillana (Sindhubhairavi) were true to the talents of Nirupama.

P r a v e e n k u m a r (nattuvanga), Srivatsa (vocal), **Guru murthy** (mridanga), Narasimhamurthy (flute), Chitra Lingam (veena) and Prasannakumar (morsing) fulfilled their respective assignment with sincere skill.

Talented Ramya

A NRI, New Jersey's Ramya Ramnarayan's perfor-

mance threw light on the results of hard work combined with innate talent. The footwork, angikas and hastas, the mobility of her facial expressions and the ease with which the spins were negotiated were a treat to behold. She began her recital with a Todayam. In the detailed delineation of a Khamach varna 'Swamiye alaizhtuva endan' the teermanas were of special interest. The traits of a virahothkhanthita nayika got etched easily. Her abhinaya was also of high order. The Ashtapadi 'Narayananam k s h a n a m a d h u r a' (Dwijavanthi) underlined the abhinaya artistry of Ramya. Full justice was done to a Papanasham Shivan's krithi 'Ennaatasam taaye Yashoda'. Kiran Subramanyam (nattuvanga), Mysore Nagendra (vocal), J.K.Sridhar (violin), N.Murthy (flute) and Srihari (mridanga) imparted a lively support.

Aishwarya enthralls

Though early in her teens, Aishwarya Vidya Raghunath gave a refreshing vocal recital under the aegis of Sri Ramakrishna Bhajana Sabha Trust at Sri Odakkattur Math. This budding singer has been well groomed in the Carnatic intricacies by veteran

vocalist Seethalakshmi Venkateshan. Her vocal recital was one of the important attractions of the Kalotsava-2003. With many more exposures and experience, without doubt, it can be said that she would blossom into an outstanding Karnatak vocalist. She had a young team of accompanists. Violinist B.Raghu was meritorious. Young Lakshmi, hailing from a family of musicians and dancers, gave a creditable account of herself as an excellent mridangist.

The vocalist began her short duration recital with a grand Begade krithi "Vara Vallabha" by Muthuswamy Dikshitar. The kalanpaswaras appended to it were a reflection of her prodigious talent. A rarely heard Ponnaiah Pillai composition "Ranganathude" in Sowrashtra consolidated the musical experience. She sang "Marivere gati evaramma" with confidence. D h a r m a v a t h i ("Bhajanaseyaruada") was captivating. But it was surprising that she rounded off the krithi with delightful swaras at "Niravadhi sukha" without singing neraval. The elaboration of Kharaharapriya for Thyagaraja's "Chakkani Rajamargam" led the listeners along into a cadence of sensitive and rhythmic melody. With growing musical maturity, untiring industry and relentless pursuit of exacting standards, there is no reason why Aishwarya should not carve an exclusive niche for herself. ■

SANGITA NIDHI AND SIKSHA (PART III)

(Published below are some thought-provoking extracts from the Keynote Address delivered by 'GARLAND' N. RAJAGOPALAN, I.A.S.(RETD.) at the 2-day "Music Symposium-2001" at Sri Shanmukhananda Sabha, Mumbai)

Gurukulavasa

This ancient institution which was the pride of India from epic dates till the first half of the last century, is dead. In the context of urban orientation, this institution cannot be revived. The students choose their preceptors for a time, for particular songs, for particular subjects, etc and it is mostly a students' market and it could only be so in urban areas and conditions. Some finish off training with a song or two from a maestro to be called as his disciple ignoring others who had done the student much good earlier.

Guru-sishya:

"Ko guru?" -Who is a guru? In his Prasnottara Ratnamalika, Adi Sankara answers 'Adhigatatavah; sishyahitaayo- dyatas satatam' [It is he who knows the truth and work always for the upbringing of his disciples.] *Kutra vidheyo yatto?* -One should endeavour for what?

- "Vidyaabhyaaase, sataushate daate" [For education, good medicine and charity.]

Next to the topics of mukti and bhakti, India has specialized and excelled in probes on the ancillary topic of guru-sishya relationship and the exalted image of the guru. Ancient lore has material on all aspects of the subject and illustrious gurus and shishyas have been held out as models. Sage Sukha was Brahmajnani even on birth while Varnadeva was Garbhajnani. Sri Tirujnana sambandar sang as a child and his entire musical output and mission were complete as he reached the age of Sri Markandeya. Their illustrious lives act as manifestation of

genius in the fields of education and training. Venerable Patanjali, who is reputed to be an incarnation of Adisesha, told his disciple, 'Whatever I know shall be yours' and the transfer of knowledge and wisdom was instantaneous and total in one stroke. [It is akin to the shortest Will in the world which read, "Darling, all that is mine is thine".] But as the disciple had earlier transgressed the code of discipline he was a brahma rakshasa. With understanding, the preceptor told him. 'You shall get relief when you spot out a competent disciple and teach him well'.

Learned and charming Chandra Sarma of Kashmir, who was to be the 'destined' disciple, arrived at the scene by chance and there ensued a nine-day non-stop session of dictation of the Maha Bhashya.

[Perhaps, the poetic part of the episode may interest some. Sarma was asked to marry the girl who tended on him when he was in a trance. On his refusal, he was taken to the king. On seeing his beautiful countenance, enlightened bearing and wisdom, king decided to give his daughter to Sarma. When he summoned the minister and whispered on the suitability of the boy as bridegroom, the minister was glad that the king had been so solicitous as to care for the welfare of 'his minister's daughter'. What happened? The motto of okapatni vrutade was not proclaimed by Tyagaraja then and learned Sarma could avail of no exemption clause since our Constitution and case-law were not then available. Beauty + Wisdom, it is clear, are, dangerous assets in the young!]

Unwilling Sarma had to bow before royal decree and marry all the three! Did they represent karma, jnana and bhakti margas or gitam, vadyam cha , nrityam or sahitya, sangita and laya? Sarma dutifully [pray, let it be, unwillingly!] helped each with progeny and left them -as in the suggested episode of Adi-Bhagawan, parents of Sage Tiruvalluvar -on to his destined, mission to become Govinda Bhagawad pada, guru to Adi Sankaracharya.)

Guru Parampara

We hear of illustrious guru parampara as in the cases of the doyen of musicians, Padma Vibhushan Dr. Semman gudi Srinivasa Ayyar and maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman. It is indeed a rare and proud privilege and honour without doubt. In respect of such guru parampara, Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswati Swamigal had said: 'Wisdom is present in each [of course, in varying degrees]. The lamp helps one to see. Without the eye, the lamp helps none. Without manas, the eyes sees nothing. Manas alone is insufficient. Atma Jyotis is vital to steady the manas so that one can see through the eye with the aid of the lamp. This atmajyotis is intellectual wisdom. To enable this atmajyotis to shine purposefully and effectively, the help of acharya parampara is vital. It is this parampara which safeguards the treasure of accumulated knowledge [eg. Sangita nidhi] as a legacy, ensures its integrity and passes it on to successive generations. The very remembrance of this illustrious parampara secures blessings'. 'Sarvadaabhighatah sadbhiih samudra iva sindhubhiih Aryassarvasamashchaiva sadaikapriyadarsanah' [The resort of good men at all times, as the ocean is of rivers, is noble, impartial and ever the one comely person.) -

Sage Narada on Sri Rama in Ramayana.

This could apply to anyone of the Classical Karnatic Trinity and many others. Their abodes saw the assembly or the confluence of the truly noble and the best among men. An episode from Mahabharata as given by Sri Villiputtur Azhwar: "Karna is wounded and blood gushes out and when Krishna touches him, the blood soils him too. That little contact with drops of the blood of Karna famous for his charity instantaneously make him ask, 'Karna, do you want any favour?' When a moment's contact has that dynamic result of making Krishna take to the charitable stance of Karna, it is easy to understand what great gurus could bestow on their sishyas!

These are mentioned here just to highlight facts like: Eminent gurus enjoy capability to transfer knowledge instantaneously. Disciples were bound by mandatory codes of conduct. Disciples had the capacity to receive instructions for days together and gurus enjoyed the capability to dictate and instruct for days continuously. Acharya parampara invests the seeker of knowledge with image and status and with knowledge enjoying authenticity. Parampara of preceptors is indeed an asset, a privilege and matter of pride.

The references to the nine-day dictation need not also be doubted. Dr.V.Raghavan says: 'If we look at the Prabandha chapters of Sanskrit treatises on music, we find described there huge edifices of compositions in numerous parts, sometimes handling a long series of ragas and talas. Our bygone musical giants went on singing for days together, introducing it for hours, unfolding it a whole night, emphasizing its contours a whole day and crowning it with effects another twenty-four hours! Their

capacious minds and the equally capacious minds of connoisseurs then comprehended and digested huge music meals of which we have today no conception'.

Many of the distinguished artistes and connoisseurs here had sat at the concerts of five hours and more till recently and Nagaswara artistes had played for six hours and more in the past. We have records of non-stop flute, violin, mridangam and tabla demonstrations of more than a day in recent years. Gandhiji had fasted for weeks! They enjoyed will power and sustained themselves on the soulful energy, vibrancy and soukhyam it he afforded. They inherited 'Lakshmana amsa'. Presumably the dictum 'Sevikku unavillai yenil, vuyitrukku eeyap padum' came into vogue because of the sustaining power of the people and the priorities followed. But, these are days of limited over matches and one-day marriages. To provide physical soukhyam in the meanwhile, canteens abound.

Are perfect gurus and perfect of sishyas born or made?

Sri Paramacharya of Kanchi refers to 'Swayamprabhaatavedah' - those who know all on birth. Perhaps it is proper to cite an episode or two on this highly relevant subject. The Krauncha birds, in sweet love, sing sweetly. The male bird falls a victim to the cruel arrow of an unkind hunter and the female utters plaintive cries. The pathetic sight kindles dormant compassion in the heart of the high souled sage-in-the-making and instantaneously he bursts out with a sloka - his maiden output - much to his own surprise cursing the hunter for separating the two birds while in love. He is startled himself and confides to his pupil: Paadabaddhoksharasamas tantrilayasanmanvitah/ Sokaartasya pravrito me sloko bhavatu naanyathah// [This which has issued from me, suffering from grief, divided into four parts, with the same number of let-

ters in each, with rhythm and time complete, can but be a sloka alone!] The dormant spirit of a composer was released. The Adi Kavi was born that instant and Lord Brahma confirmed it to him. Such instances are reported in many cases like the Apostle Sri Sundaramurti Nayanar, Sirkazhi Muthu Tandavar, etc. It has been like unveiling the statue that has already been shaped or releasing the flood waters from reservoir by lifting the sluice gates.

Just another instance of birth of child prodigy composer, Sri Tirujnanasambandar. The father emerging from the tank sees remnants of milk particles on the chubby cheeks of his dear child left on the steps. When questioned, the musical child of intellectual eminence sings, 'Todudaiya sevian' and floods the spiritual field with its 384 immortal songs before diluting itself in the Infinite just at the tender age of sixteen, when he should be in Plus 2 a standard by present standards! Bhaskaracharya and many others illuminate the ample pages of Indian history.

Padma Vibhushan Dr. Balamurali krishna demonstrated his manodharma at Bangalore and elsewhere with instant raga formulation, instant sishya -composition and instant singing.

If it is to be construed that composers, musicians, etc are only 'born' it would seriously hamper the popularity and growth of the art and free the bulk of gurus from the field of siksha. Let us suppose the presence of a disciple before maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman sitting with a violin. The guru queries: What do you see in front of me ? The sishya replies: 'The entire sangita nidhi my guru commands, which I am here to inherit with his blessings'.

He is a model student [uthama sishya] worthy of his master. Suppose he answers, 'A violin', he could be anything and his future may hang in the balance- on the master's willingness and capability to invest and bring out the best and the student's capability to absorb and assimilate.

(To be concluded)

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Thank you, Sir



Dr.R.V.Raghavendra, a connoisseur to the core has always been a well-wisher of Karnatak music and its artistes.His unique programmes have proved to be of great utility. His generosity and love and commitment to the Karnatak music and Karnatak artistes does not need any introduction. He has once again done a great service by sponsoring a CD writer to GUNAGRAHI.

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LEISURE

PHOTO QUIZ....6

S.K.Lakshminarayana (Babu) page

QUIZ OF FINE ARTS....6

1. What do you know about raga Dhauta Panchamam?
2. Give its scale?
3. Mention the Dikshitar-krithi in that raga?
4. What is Dhruva in Pallavi?
5. How is it rendered?
6. Give an example for the above?
7. What do you know about the Dhruva Ganam?
8. What is Do-Taara?
9. How is it tuned?
10. Explain its structure?

SOLUTION TO QUIZ OF FINE ARTS....5

1. The name of the first of the sooladi saptalatas.
2. Its component angas are: laghu, druta, laghu, laghu (| O ||).
3. 9th. 4. Shadja, shuddha rishabha, sadharana gandhara, shuddha madhyama, panchama, shuddha dhaivatha and kakali nishadha.
5. Sarv swara gamaka varika rakti raga.
6. Morning raga. Rendering the ga long.
7. Thyagaraja's "Teliyaleru Rama".
8. Tambura. 9. Because besides giving the notes mandra shadja, mandra panchama and madhya shadja (two saranis), it gives rich harmonics or overtones.
10. V.Praveen.



SOLUTION TO PHOTO QUIZ....5

Legendary dancer-Gurus: M.K.Sarja, Kelucharan Mahopatra and Vedantam Sathyanarayana Sharma.

Raga, Tana and Pallavi is often called the watermark of the Karnatak music system. This virtuoso exercise was the mainstay of recitals held in early centuries and in the initial decades of this century when concerts were held mainly in the chambers of the royalty and the landed aristocracy with only a privileged few listening to classical music. The recitals of those distant days were built around elaborate raga exposition, followed by Tana and Pallavi singing lasting several hours. Musical history is full of references to even contests held in such concerts in the royal courts. When the venue of concerts shifted to the Sangeeta Sahas at the beginning of this Century and in the wake of the adoption of what is called the 'Ariyakudi padilhati' of the concert format some six or seven decades back, encompassing different types of musical compositions which could sustain the interest of a mixed audience, the importance earlier attached to RTP gradually declined over the years. In the contemporary scenario when concerts last for hardly a couple of hours RTPs generally skipped. Efforts have, however, been on in recent years to revive this ancient tradition.

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